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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

November 10, 1952

CATTLE FEEDING SITUATION - NOVEMBER 1, 1952

The cattle feeding situation to the end of October indicates a volume of cattle feeding this season somewhat larger than last year, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics reports. Prospective large increases in some Corn Belt States will be partially offset by decreases in feeding sections outside the Corn Belt. The movement of feeder cattle into the Corn Belt continued large during October, reaching a record volume for the month. The July-October inshipments were 20 percent above last year. Cattle feeding is expected to be as high or higher than last year in all of the Corn Belt States except Kansas. Feed grain supplies are larger than last season in the Western Corn Belt, but below last year for other regions of the country. Hay and roughage supplies are generally adequate in most feeding areas, but demand for hay is strong from drought stricken areas.

In the West, cattle feeding operations will probably be below last year. In both California and Colorado the number of cattle on feed is expected to be below the record high number fed last year but still at a high level. In other Western States the trend is mixed with operations indicated to be higher in some States and lower in others. Cattle feeding in Texas will be sharply reduced from last year. Wheat pastures failed to develop in the Great Plains due to continued drought.

Shipments of stocker and feeder cattle into the 9 Corn Belt States for which records are available for the months July through October were about 20 percent larger than last year. All of the Corn Belt States except Nebraska and South Dakota show increases over last year in the July-October inshipments. Largest increases were in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Ohio, all of which reported increases of over 50 percent. Other States showing increases were Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Iowa. Feeder cattle inshipments from public markets were below a year ago for Missouri and Kansas.

Feeding activity in California probably will be somewhat lower than last season, but still at a very high level. Colorado, the leading feeding State in the Mountain area, will feed fewer cattle than the record number fed last season. In Washington, Oregon, and Utah more cattle are expected to be placed on feed than last season. In the remaining States the number of cattle to be fed will be about the same or smaller than last year. The number of cattle fed in the irrigated North Platte Valley of western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming is expected to approach the rather larger number fed last season. Numbers fed in Oklahoma and Texas are expected to be sharply below last year because of short feed supplies. As a result of drought, little wheat pasture is available for livestock in the southern Great Plains. In this area native pastures and feed of all kind are very short.

The 1952 corn crop is expected to be the second largest on record. The crop is of excellent quality, and there is no pressure to feed the crop rapidly as was the case last year in areas where considerable quantities of soft corn had to be fed rather quickly to avoid deterioration. Hay production in 1952 is less than the very large crop harvested last year, but is ample in most of the important feeding States. However, demand for hay from areas hit by drought has pushed up hay prices in the feeding areas of the Plains and Mountain States.

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The price of feeder steers at 8 feeder markets for the week ending October 30 was $24.20 per hundred pounds or $8.80 lower than for the same week last year. The average price per hundred pounds during October was about $9.50 below last October, and the July-October average was about $8.50 lower. Contract feeding is generally on a larger scale than usual. Some ranchers, disappointed in lower prices for feeder cattle this fall, are placing their cattle in commercial and farm feed lots for custom feeding rather than to sell at prevailing prices for feeder cattle.

Many lightweight cattle have been purchased for long term feeding. The record for 8 markets shows that during the July-October period the number of feeder calves and steers under 700 pounds shipped to country points was up 11 percent from last year and made up 57 percent of the stocker and feeder cattle and calves going to the country. The number of heavy feeder steers weighing over 900 pounds shipped from these 8 markets during July-October was down 5 percent from a year ago.

Special surveys made October 1 in the three leading cattle feeding States in the Corn Belt--Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska--showed 14 percent more cattle on feed than on October 1, 1951.

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